

Existing law requires public school board members to receive training and instruction in state school laws; in the laws governing the powers, duties, and responsibilities of school boards; and in educational trends, research, and policy. In a school district that has one or more schools identified as academically unacceptable or in need of academic assistance, requires that at least two hours focus on the improvement of failing schools. Requires remaining hours to focus on topics including but not limited to literacy and numeracy, leadership development, dropout prevention, career and technical education, redesigning high schools, early childhood education, school discipline, and harassment, intimidation, and bullying. Further requires training to include instruction on the Open Meetings Law and the Public Bid Law.

Prior law required school board members to receive at least four hours of such training and instruction.

New law instead requires school board members to receive at least six hours of such training and instruction annually. Also provides that, in order to receive the designation of Distinguished School Board Member as provided in new law, a school board member shall receive a minimum of 16 hours of training and instruction during his first year of board service.

New law further clarifies that the requirement for training and instruction on literacy and numeracy, leadership development, dropout prevention, career and technical education, redesigning high schools, early childhood education, school discipline, and harassment, intimidation, bullying, the Open Meetings Law, and the Public Bid Law applies to all school board members and not only those who are in a school district with one or more schools identified as academically unacceptable or in need of academic assistance. Also adds a requirement for training and instruction on the minimum foundation program and formula.

Existing law authorizes receiving such instruction from an institution of higher education in the state, instruction sponsored by the state Dept. of Education, or an in-service training program conducted by a school board central office or the La. School Boards Association (LSBA). Provides that the instruction and the method for demonstrating attendance shall be pre-approved by the LSBA and requires the instructor to report a school board member's attendance to the LSBA.

Existing law requires the training entity to issue a certificate of completion to each school board member and that a copy of such certificate be entered into the minutes of his respective school board. Provides that the superintendent of the school system shall verify that the instruction meets requirements.

New law additionally provides that a school board member who has received a certificate of completion for the initial 16 hours of training and instruction and also has received an annual certificate of completion of the required training for the three subsequent consecutive years shall receive the "Distinguished School Board Member" designation. Requires the State Dept. of Education to issue each such member an appropriate certificate attesting to such designation. Also provides that a member in office on Jan. 1, 2011, who has prior service on the board may receive the designation if he completes 16 hours of training during 2011 and completes the required training for the subsequent three consecutive years.

Existing law requires the LSBA to post regularly updated information on its website relative to training hours and subject matter completed by each school board member.

New law further requires the school system superintendent, at least annually, to transmit to the school board's official journal a press release detailing the information for his school board that is posted on the LSBA website as required by existing law and to include in such press release information concerning each member who has been designated a "Distinguished School Board Member".

Effective January 1, 2011.

(Amends R.S. 17:53)

